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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT



IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

REACTION AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL, in London, has long been famous for its splendid training school for nurses, and the women who came out from it into the world have made their mark wherever they have gone. A special characteristic of the school has formerly been a certain free and fearless balance of mind and unhindered development of personality among its pupils. To permit this character-development to the fullest extent compatible with discipline and the unity needed in a large hospital, was the cherished purpose of the two Matrons who gave the school its stamp,—Mrs. Fenwick and Miss Isla Stewart, and not only did they select women of strong character, but also encouraged in every way the qualities of moral courage and initiative.

Such women have taken the lead in progressive professional movements in Great Britain, and have refused to be intimidated or threatened by the despotic ring of hospital governors and other persons whose first purpose is to keep nurses in a subjected state similar to that of women employed in industry.

So long as Miss Stewart lived no open attack was made, and the whole nursing world knew that she stood in direct contrast to the great majority of hospital matrons in London, in her support of registration by the state, her encouragement of co-operation among, for, and by nurses, and her resistance to outside and non-professional control over their work and wages.

No sooner was she dead than plans prepared and held in readiness for the event were put in motion. We all know how and by what power she was replaced. The reactionary influence that reversed her standards also seized an opportunity when Miss Rogers retired from Leicester, to secure control also of that school.

We do not say that the matrons who were placed in these posts are not personally estimable. We do say, though, emphatically, that they are absolutely submissive to the tory gentlemen who control them,—so much so that their loyalty to their pupils and professional progress is

minimized thereby. Recently the cloven hoof has come into plain sight at St. Bartholomew's. The members of the Nurses' League (Alumnæ Association) asked for the use of the assembly room in the nurses' home, to hold there a meeting to discuss state registration, and it was refused them. Free speech is no longer to be tolerated at Bart's, and the sisters in permanent posts will have to think as Mr. Sydney Holland and his ring think, or keep their thoughts to themselves. Naturally, one place where submission is never to be looked for is in the *British Journal of Nursing*, and this action will be resisted to the utmost, until public opinion is brought to bear upon it.

We remember a somewhat similar set of circumstances in one of our own large hospitals in the early days. In that case the alumnæ revolted and broke away entirely from its training school. Later on the breach was healed, and the peace that was made was peace with honor. Our advice to our sisters at Bart's is, "Never yield to tyranny. Resistance is a duty toward our profession, that its future may be honorable, not a return to the servitude and degradation of the past."

ITEMS

As a result of the Nurses' Association agitation, the pressure of the Women's Clubs, and Dr. Hecker's magnificent paper at the Cologne Congress, a discussion on the conditions of nursing is now going on in the German Reichstag.

DR. HECKER's address on the "Overstrain of Nurses" is now ready for sale. It has been translated into English by Frau Gain Praetorius and Frau Anita Becker, and is a fine piece of work. It may be ordered from Miss L. L. Dock, price twelve cents post paid, ten cents without postage.

THE British Nurses' Registration bill is again in the House of Commons.

MRS. KLOSZ, editor of the *Nursing Journal of India*, writes to correct our supposition that Miss Butcher, who took editorial duties in Mrs. Klosz's absence, is her sister. Miss Butcher is an English nurse, who has had a long experience of work in India.

MISS ELSTON has been appointed directress of the Parnet Hospital at Hussein-Dey, Algiers, and took up her duties there on March 1. All success attend her as heretofore!

DR. HAMILTON, head of the Protestant Hospital at Bordeaux, has been made an officer of public instruction. The visiting nurse service under her direction has received another gift of money.

MISS KELLY, for twenty years lady superintendent of Steeven's Hospital, Dublin, has retired on pension. We hope she will now have time to visit America. She will find many friends here.

MISS BRODERICK has been writing some delightful letters to the *British Journal of Nursing*, on her recent American trip. Has she perhaps pictured us too rosily?

ANOTHER matron retiring with honorable record of twenty-three years in her position is Miss Fisher, of Leeds.

DR. OSLER'S CHALLENGE TO THE ANTI-VACCINATIONISTS.—“A great deal of literature has been distributed casting discredit upon the value of vaccination in the prevention of smallpox. I do not see how any one who has gone through epidemics as I have, or who is familiar with the history of the subject, and who has any capacity left for clear judgment, can doubt its value. Some months ago I was twitted by the editor of the *Journal of the Anti-vaccination League* for ‘a curious silence’ on this subject. I would like to issue a Mount Carmel-like challenge to any ten unvaccinated priests of Baal. I will go into the next severe epidemic with ten selected, vaccinated persons and ten selected unvaccinated persons—I should prefer to choose the latter—three members of parliament, three anti-vaccination doctors, if they could be found, and four anti-vaccination propagandists. And I will make this promise—neither to jeer nor jibe when they catch the disease, but to look after them as brothers, and for the four or five who are certain to die I will try to arrange the funerals with all the pomp and ceremony of an anti-vaccination demonstration.”—*American Magazine*.